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# Agri-News

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## FARMERS EXPECTING BETTER THAN AVERAGE YIELDS FOR 2003

Tennessee farmers are expecting better than average yields for most of their 2003 crops, although they experienced less than ideal planting conditions this spring. Based on an August 1 crop yield survey conducted by the Tennessee Agricultural Statistics Service, corn, soybeans, burley tobacco, and hay are all expected to show increased yields from the previous year. Cotton yields are forecast to decline from a year ago, but are still above the 5-year average. Record yield and production are projected for this year's hay crop. State Statistician Debra Kenerson stated, "Weather caused numerous delays in planting this year's crops, but mild temperatures and timely rains during the growing season have producers optimistic for a better than average year." The August forecast, which is based on farmers' expectations of final yields as of the first of the month, showed the following: **Corn**, 120 bushels per acre, up 13 bushels from year earlier; **Cotton**, 664 pounds per acre, down 77 pounds from 2002; **Soybeans**, 33 bushels per acre, up 2 bushels from a year ago; **Burley Tobacco**, 2,000 pounds per acre, 100 pounds above last year; and **Other Hay**, 2.50 tons per acre, up 0.3 tons from last year and a new state record.

### CORN YIELDS THIRD HIGHEST ON RECORD

Tennessee's corn production is forecast at 75.6 million bushels, up 14 percent from a year ago. Corn yields are expected to average 120 bushels per acre, 13 bushels above 2002 and the third highest yield on record. Acres for grain are estimated to increase 2 percent from last year to 630,000, the highest since 1996. A relatively warm, dry spring allowed corn planting to begin early and progress ahead of the 5-year average throughout April. Farmers experienced frequent planting delays during May due to persistent precipitation and finished behind schedule. Timely rains and moderate temperatures during June and July, however, proved beneficial to the crop's development, specifically during pollination. As of the first week of August, 80 percent of the crop had reached the dough stage with nearly half of the crop having entered the dent or beyond stage. Over three-fourths of the crop was rated in good-to-excellent condition.

### SOYBEAN PRODUCTION LARGEST IN 6 YEARS

Soybean production is forecast at 38.0 million bushels, up 9 percent from 2002 and the largest production since 1997. Yields are expected to average 33 bushels per acre, 2 bushels better than a year ago. Acreage for harvest is estimated at 1.15 million acres, 3 percent above last year. Frequent showers and thunderstorms during the first half of May prevented producers from making any substantial progress with planting, lagging almost 2 full weeks behind normal by the third week of the month. During the month of June, planting continued to be slowed by wet conditions, but was virtually completed by the first week of July. As of August 3, soybeans were developing about a week behind the normal pace with over a half of the crop blooming and one-fourth setting pods. The crop was rated in mostly good-to-excellent condition.

### COTTON PRODUCTION DOWN 10 PERCENT

Cotton production is forecast at 740,000 bales, down 10 percent from 2002 and the lowest expected production in three years. Cotton yields are expected to average 664 pounds per acre, down 77 pounds from a year ago. Cotton growers planted 560,000 acres, down 1 percent. Producers are expected to harvest 535,000 acres, up 1 percent from 2002. Wet, cool weather during May hindered growers from making any substantial progress planting this year's cotton crop. Adverse weather during the month resulted in thousands of acres being re-planted and thousands more lost to flooding. Growers wrapped up planting activities by mid-June, almost two full weeks behind normal. Consequently, the crop's development has lagged one to two weeks behind normal throughout the growing season. As of August 3, the crop was in mostly fair-to-good condition with 64 percent setting bolls, compared with 92 percent normally setting bolls at this time.

BURLEY PRODUCTION LOWEST SINCE 1942

Burley production as of August 1 is forecast at 56.0 million pounds, down 2 percent from 2002 and the lowest in 61 years. Yields are forecast to average 2,000 pounds per acre, up 100 pounds from a year earlier. Burley growers plan to harvest 28,000 acres, 7 percent below a year ago. Tobacco transplanting began on schedule in early May, but quickly fell behind due to frequent showers and thunderstorms. Transplanting was completed slightly behind the 5-year average by the end of June. Black shank and blue mold have caused problems, as wet weather during June and July encouraged the spread of diseases. Over half of the acreage had been topped by August 3 with the majority of the crop rated in fair-to-good condition. Yields per acre for the dark types are all down from last year. Tennessee’s dark-fired tobacco yields are forecast at 2,900 pounds for Type 22, Eastern Dark-Fired, and 3,200 pounds for Type 23, Western Dark-Fired. Type 35, Dark Air-Cured, is forecast at 2,400 pounds per acre.

NEW STATE RECORD FOR HAY PRODUCTION

Hay production, excluding alfalfa, is forecast at 4.88 million tons, up 11 percent from 2002 and a new state record. Although hay producers experienced numerous delays this spring in harvesting their crop, the wet weather has contributed to record setting yields. Yields are expected to average 2.50 tons per acre, up 0.3 tons from last year. The first cutting of other hay began on schedule during the first week of May, but was slowed due to persistent rains. By mid-June, nearly all of the State's alfalfa hay and 80 percent of the other hay acreage had been cut once. With mild temperatures and regular rainfall throughout June and July, producers have already been able to make second and third cuttings on some fields. Both alfalfa and other hay have been rated in mostly good condition throughout the growing season.

APPLE PRODUCTION UP FROM LAST YEAR

Apple production is estimated at 9.0 million, up 2.5 million pounds from 2002. Development of the state’s apple crop progressed at a normal pace through most of the growing season. Above normal rainfall in many areas this season has benefitted some orchards and presented problems in others with increased disease pressure.

CROP FORECASTS: TENNESSEE AND UNITED STATES, AUGUST 1, 2003, WITH COMPARISONS

Crop	Unit	Harvested Acres		Yield Per Acre		Production	
			Indicated		Indicated		Indicated
		2002	2003	2002	2003	2002	2003
		Thousands		Number of Units		Thousands	
TENNESSEE							
Apples	lb.	---	---	---	---	6,500	9,000
Corn for grain	bu.	620	630	107	120	66,340	75,600
Cotton <sup>1</sup>	lb.	530	535	741	664	818	740
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	ton	2,000	1,950	2.20	2.50	4,400	4,875
Peaches	lb.	---	---	---	---	4,000	3,500
Soybeans	bu.	1,120	1,150	31.0	33.0	34,720	37,950
Tobacco, All	lb.	35.90	34.04	2,096	2,155	75,261	73,366
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	5.0	5.1	3,110	2,900	15,550	14,790
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	.39	.40	3,550	3,200	1,385	1,280
Burley (31)	lb.	30.0	28.0	1,900	2,000	57,000	56,000
One-sucker (35)	lb.	.51	.54	2,600	2,400	1,326	1,296
Winter Wheat	bu.	300	270	46.0	52.0	13,800	14,040
UNITED STATES							
Apples	lb.	---	---	---	---	8,555,600	9,266,600
Corn for grain	bu.	69,313	71,915	130.0	139.9	9,007,659	10,064,452
Cotton <sup>1</sup>	lb.	12,426.6	12,302.4	665	667	17,208.6	17,103.5
Hay, All (excluding Alfalfa)	ton	41,362	40,838	1.86	2.01	77,138	82,066
Peaches	lb.	---	---	---	---	2,575,400	2,618,100
Soybeans	bu.	72,160	72,626	37.8	39.4	2,729,709	2,862,039
Tobacco, All	lb.	428.66	413.71	2,055	2,031	880,734	840,236
E. Dark-fired (22)	lb.	7.45	7.60	3,126	2,966	23,292	22,540
W. Dark-fired (23)	lb.	2.79	2.80	3,636	3,371	10,145	9,440
Burley (31)	lb.	158.60	149.20	1,892	1,949	300,051	290,800
One-sucker (35)	lb.	2.61	2.74	2,922	2,641	7,626	7,236
Winter Wheat	bu.	29,651	36,491	38.5	46.9	1,142,802	1,712,150

<sup>1</sup> Production in 480-lb. net weight bales. U.S. production includes American-Pima cotton.

**REMINDER:** All forecasts in this report are based on conditions about August 1 and do not reflect any possible weather affects since that time.